The Builder.

No. CCCV.

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WE left our readers last week on the threshold of Manchester Cathedral, where considerable alterations and improvements have been going on for some time past, and many more are needed. In taking them there, we might have shewn them streets greatly widened and improved, and some new ones opened, but these have been already mentioned; and, on the other hand, we ought to have pointed out in a different tone some pavements recently laid down, of stone, with a surface so full of inequalities as to establish countless reservoirs during the shower which is too often falling in Manchester, for the discomfort of unfortunate pedestrians.

The cathedral is an interesting old building (as every one knows), and we grieved to see the miserable state of dilapidation into which the tower has lapsed,—amounting almost to danger. It was stated in a London paper, a short time ago, that its repair had been determined on, but this does not seem to be the case: something must be done, however, before long.

The chapter-house, on the south side of the choir, has been rebuilt, under the direction of Mr. Holden, architect: the position of the base-moulding would seem to have been changed, and not improved. The ground wants clearing away on this side of the cathedral.

Within, the building owes much to a late churchwarden, Mr. Brooks, whose care for the improvement of the building seems not to have ceased with his office. The ceiling of the nave has been decorated with colour,—the panels are blue, the ribs white and red, the bosses, &c., gilt. Carved oak sittings are being introduced, and some cumbrous pews removed. The most striking of the new works is the font, designed by Mr. Truefitt, and already described in our pages. It stands at the west end, on the north side, and is unquestionably a very meritorious work. Since our notice of it, a very elaborately-constructed cover, of oak, designed by the same gentleman, has been added, and ought to increase his reputation. It is pyramidal in shape, 2 feet 6 inches wide at its base, and 9 feet high. It consists of a central octagon of open panels to two-thirds the height, from which radiate sixteen compartments of intricate work. Between these are three rows of open panels, which recede as they rise, encircled with five tiers of pinnacles, amounting in all to eighty: above are united eight crocketted ribs; and the whole is surmounted by a figure of John the Baptist. It was carved and built by Philip and Wynne, of Oxford-street, London, and is most creditable to them.

The cathedral contains a singularly large quantity of carved screen-work, some of which is very beautiful, and deserves illustration. The double rood-screen is curious. A portion of the plaster ceiling under the rood-loft having been removed recently, a black-letter quotation from Deuteronomy, on the top beam of the screen, is made visible: it has the date 1503.

From the church to the gaol is a worse transition than the reverse would be; but thus circumstances led us. The Borough Gaol, which is now being built, under the direction of Mr. George Shorland, the town surveyor, by Mr. D. Bellhouse, contractor, is intended for 486 prisoners, and stands on an area of ten acres. The plan, arrangement, and fittings, are precisely similar to those of Pentonville.*

The style of the exterior is Italian, extensively rusticated, and when seen from a distance the general effect of the building is good.† It is less satisfactory, however, on a nearer approach: the upper story is much too massive and heavy for the lower, which it seems to crush, and there is a disagreeable want of connection between the main central building and the wings. The vermiculated stones in the columns of the great gateway are, in some cases, mere caricatures, and should be altered at once. The forms which the vermiculated panels in the stones present are *floral*. The Tudor strawberry leaf appears to have been the type followed in one or two instances, and the result is a great disfigurement. An architect is wrong who trusts matters of this sort to the workmen (as has evidently been the case here), unless he knows well the hands he has to deal with. These and other salient points for objections, however, ought not to blind us to much that is meritorious. The work appears all sound and excellent; the materials used are brick and stone; and the scale of the construction may be judged of when we say that some of the stones in the main cornice weigh 6 tons each. The corridors inside, open all the way up to the roof, with galleries communicating with the cells in the upper stories on each side, are vaulted with brick with open spaces at intervals for light. These vaultings tend to make the place dark, and, as there is an iron roof (slated) above all, might well have been dispensed with.

Mr. Cockerell's branch bank has already been spoken of by us as having a character suitable to its purpose; and of the Theatre Royal a full description will be found in our third volume. The value of the provision for the prevention of fire mentioned in that account was found not long ago: it probably saved the edifice. The arrangement of the stage machinery here is particularly good, and may be usefully referred to by those who are engaged in similar works. The Royal Manchester Lunatic Asylum, a building of considerable extent, at Stockport Etchells, 7 miles from the city, is now being fitted up and furnished. It has a façade of 350 feet in extent, with a central projecting building. The style is Elizabethan, the materials employed stock bricks with stone dressings. Mr. Lane is the architect, and the contract was taken by Mr. Hollins at about 10,000*l*.

The same architect (one of the oldest standing in Manchester, and who sees an entirely new school growing up around him), has added a new wing to the Royal Infirmary. It has a *tetrastyle* Ionic portico of stone (the wall of the building behind is of fire-brick), and cost about 10,000*l*.

Half an hour took us to LIVERPOOL, where many large works are proceeding. At the Liverpool terminus many thousands of pounds have been spent. A new station has been built, under the direction of Mr. Tite, and by this time is probably opened for use. It is an Italian building with a heavy dentil cornice, and an extensive colonnade for the convenience of passengers arriving. The immense tunnel which is to run right under the town is making rapid progress, and has occasioned some few settlements in houses above, the crown of it being in parts at a comparatively small distance below the surface. The roof over the line and platforms is not yet put up. The space will be about 150 feet, if no intermediate supports are used. An experimental portion of an iron roof formed on the same principle as the large palm-stove in Kew Gardens, was put up by the patentee, but not meeting all the requirements of the case, was taken down again.

The old façade, that enormous architectural imposition, opposite St. George's Hall, is to remain, with some slight alterations. Right proud may Liverpool be of St. George's Hall. It is one of the finest works of modern times, and an honour to the country. And while she is proud of it, let her watch carefully its completion. There is yet time enough to spoil the interior. It is simply in carcass, and the works appear to progress very slowly. The centreing is ready for the vaulting of the great hall: the vaulting is to be formed, as we understood, of square earthen pots, which will be made to facilitate ventilation. On each side of the hall is a range of six polished Aberdeen granite columns, and a podium all round the immense apartment, of the same material. One of the courts has similar granite columns. The concert room is on a higher level, with a semicircular end, and has a large central light. The completion of the design is entrusted to Mr. Weightman.

Short as was poor Elmes's life, he has earned for himself a prominent niche in the gallery of English worthies.

Another music hall is now being erected in Liverpool, near the Myrtle-street Independent Chapel, a Gothic edifice erected under Mr. Gee, architect, in 1844. This hall, designed and carried out by Mr. Cunningham, is for the Liverpool Philharmonic Society, and is a building with considerable claims to attention. It is of stone, Italian in style, and in two stories externally. It stands at a junction of streets, so that two fronts are seen. The ground story is arcaded on both fronts: the principal story shews a series of ten large ornamented windows on one side, and seven on the other, rising from a continued dado; and a massive cornice, with consoles and antefixæ (the latter at the angles being in the shape of lyres, and not elegant), crowns the whole. The elements, it will be seen, are simple, but the effect is good, resulting chiefly from attention to proportions. The ground story is low and somewhat heavy, but this has the effect of giving increased importance to the principal story, and aids in conferring a

* See our fifth volume, p. 483.

† The following, from a Manchester paper, will save us the trouble of description:—"The area enclosed is of an irregular form, and is surrounded by a lofty and substantial wall of summit stone. At three of the principal angles are octagonal towers, intended as residences for some of the officers of the gaol—these have a striking effect. The main entrance is through an arched gateway, which has its front towards the city. The entrance building and gateway is in the bold Italian style, and columns varied by massive square blocks of stone finished in rustic. On either side of the main entrance are the proposed residence for the governor and chaplain of the gaol. The gaol will be entered through a spacious court-yard, from which the visiter will obtain a view of the main elevation of this vast edifice, with the extended wings east and west forming a background to the view. The principal part of the structure contains the chapel in the upper part, and in the lower a main lobby, with the magistrates' visiting rooms and other principal offices of the gaol on each side. At the termination of this lobby is the entrance doorway to the central hall of inspection, from which, in four directions, radiate the corridors containing the separate cells for the prisoners. The central hall of inspection is a lofty octagonal interior, lighted by a dome. Around the hall are carried galleries, which communicate with the two ranges of galleries extending on each side of the corridors. The female department is in the corridor to the east, and is separated from the central hall of inspection. There are three stories of cells in the wings: the four corridors contain in the whole 486 cells—108 for female and 378 for male prisoners."

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